# NEWS AND REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND AUTHORS

## A Bookman's Day Book

By Burton Rascoe

APRIL 6

BILL BENÉT phoned he couldn't take lunch with me because he is standing godfather to Chris Morley's baby. . . . JOE SCRIVANI, the day foreman, at make-up, tells me there are so many box heads in the literary pages they look rotten. . . . LOUIS UNTERMEYER dropped in to say: "Let's let by-gones be by-gones. I've got a new book out I think you'll like. I am sure you will be one of the few who will notice that in the Cabell parody I have inserted several old French verse forms disguised as prose." . . . Louis and I used to hate each other like poison (in print); but everybody who was mixed up in the new poetry movement hated everybody else in it at one time or another. . . . Louis and I fell out over CONRAD AIKEN'S poetry, and a little later Louis and Aiken had made up, and Aiken and I had fallen out over Aiken's book of criticisms, which I panned vigorously. . . . Read Louis's "*Heavens*" to-night and think it is excellent in the poetic parodies and not so good in the prose. Wish he hadn't told me in that left-handed way to look out for the triolets and rondeaux in the Cabell piece, because they now stick out like a sore thumb. . . . Which reminds me that I haven't yet seen a good parody of Cabell's style. Tom ...r's and Don Stewart's and Untermeyer's all seem to me pretty lame parodies of mannerisms, rather than of the spirit. . . . The nearest approach to a true parody of Cabell is GUY HOLT'S conversation. . . . Read the medieval Latin hymns until late, and was again convinced that the "*Ad Sanctum Spiritum*," by the unhappy son of Hugo Capet, Robert, King of France, and the "*Sequentia de Passione B. Virginis*" (or "*Stabat Mater*") are the loveliest of all those that have come down to us. The "*Dies Irae*" I dislike.

APRIL 7

READ a sketch by KENNETH BURKE and EZRA POUND'S showing up of Middleton Murry in the *Dial* and liked them both. . . . Burke is a young man of remarkable gifts. I have followed his work with keen interest for several years. I have been a little dismayed at times at some of his tortuous essays in fiction, but perhaps that messy story in the *Little Review* and a recent piece in *Manuscript* were only experiments in form. . . . To lunch with CARL VAN DOREN and BEN RAY REDMAN and Ray regales us with some cockney stories which, as usual, I have forgotten already. . . . Read the symposium on the novel in the *New Republic* and found HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER'S and JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER'S the most agreeable reading, the first because Webster merely states explicitly and clearly his own aim as a novelist and the second because Hergesheimer seems at last to have evolved a distinctly original style. He has been struggling toward this for some time, floundering amid a sea of commas in a distillate of Meredithian and Henry Jamesian involutions. Now he has subjected the comma and made it count for pause and emphasis in limpid and telling prose. WALDO FRANK'S contribution is a farrago of things Middleton Murry, Ernest Boyd, André Gide, Remy de Gourmont and others have said, and since these things are contradictory and even wrong (vide, his reiteration of Murry's nonsense about Flaubert and Zola), his piece gets nowhere. WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE'S bit is ill-tempered and insular, and it sounds as if Old Bill were losing his sense of humor. Perhaps, after all, THEODORE DREISER'S paper is the soundest because he allows that the scope of the novel is extensive, and that he takes pleasure in Gautier and Balzac, Hugo and Tolstoy, Daudet and all sorts and conditions of novelists. . . . The *New Republic* editors permit Daudet's "*Sapho*" to be misspelled three times in the symposium. . . . FRANCIS HACKETT comes in and tells me of his plans to go to England, and thence to Sweden to bury himself and write a novel. . . . Had been reading "*Patchwork*," by BEVERLY NICHOLS, who is announced as an English Scott Fitzgerald, and had found it dull and had gone to bed, when I was awakened by a terrific racket at the door. It was JOHN BISHOP and RED M'CAIG, and they weren't drunk, just full of high spirits. I propped myself up in bed and talked with Bishop about William Butler Yeats and T. S. Eliot for more than an hour, while McCaig read my copy of "*Poetica Erotica*."

APRIL 8

TO ALFRED KNOPF'S luncheon, whereat were Ernest Boyd, Pierre de Lanux, Thomas Beer, Lucile Davidson, Edmund Wilson jr., Edmund Bjorkman, Blanche Knopf, Carl Van Vechten, Alfred's father, Mr. Frankel, Franklin Spier and a lady and a gentleman whose names I didn't catch. After three hours of conversation as to whether it was advisable or not to translate Andre Gide (a discussion not yet settled after four previous meetings), it was decided that Alfred should bring out "The Pastoral Symphony." . . . JULIAN MASON, The Trib's managing editor, is back after a trip to Chicago, and he tells me of a scheme he has to cut down on smoking. Which is to keep an empty cigarette holder in his mouth, since smoking is two-thirds a nervous habit. . . . BEATRICE KAUFMAN tells me that Marc Connelley has thought up a good joke about my stuff being so long they are going to publish it hereafter as a serial. . . . To-night I read CARL VAN VECHTEN'S "*Peter Whiffle*." I was prejudiced against it as another revival of the 1890 trick of writing a fake memoir, and further prejudiced against it when I glanced through the pages and saw the old Huneker stunt of cataloguing names of writers, artists, musicians and poets in a glutted hodge-podge. But once I got into the book I read it through to the end with absorbed interest. An imitation of "*The Confessions of a Young Man*" and "*Painted Veils*," but a good one.

APRIL 9

CALLED up ERNEST BOYD this morning and asked him to go for a walk in the park. We spent two hours and a half ambling about and talking. I told him about "*Peter Whiffle*" and about Van Vechten's scheme for outwitting the Comstocks by putting certain passages in French. . . . Boyd said he thought that the ignoring of Van Vechten by the men who one would naturally suppose would be for him was one of the most curious incidents he had encountered in literary circles. "The man has erudition, taste and a civilized point of view, you know," said Boyd, shaking his head. We wondered how it came about that HENRY MENCKEN and STUART SHERMAN united in such fulsome praise of LEWISOHN'S "*Up Stream*," which we both think is a whining book and an elaborate self-justification for his failure as a novelist and a poet. And why should a man who is as good a critic as Lewisohn lament that he has not written great poems and novels? We remember Sainte-Beuve, but not for his bum novel, "*Volupte*." . . . Later I read BRANDER MATTHEWS'S spirited attack on "*Up Stream*" in the *Times*, wherein the old boy again attributes to Lemaitre the epigram of Saintsbury's about criticism of contemporaries not being criticism, but conversation. Which reminds me of Ambrose Bierce's bon mot: "Brander Matthews is nothing if not accurate, and he is not accurate." Saintsbury is wrong; criticism of dead writers is not criticism; it is clerical work—tabulating, indexing and filing. . . . Dipped into "*Painted Windows*" and liked the piece on Dean Inge fairly well, but couldn't go the rest. The book should be signed "By the Gentleman With the Bluster." . . . Read Anatole France's "*Le Comte Morin, Deputé*," a jocose satire, and tackled Arno Holz's "*Die Blechschmiede*" again, but for me it is difficult reading, with its smelted words half a yard long. I am convinced, though, that it is a great work, the second part of "*Faust*" brought up to date and rewritten by a fantastic satirist. . . . Dropped a note to Miss Inger asking her to send RUBE GOLDBERG a copy of the George Grosz book of paintings and drawings which I promised Rube. Grosz is one of the leaders of the Expressionismus group in Berlin; he was jailed during the war for his caricatures of the Kaiser, and after the revolution he was jailed once or twice by Scheidemann for his cartoons of the revolution. His technique is sophistication carried to the point where it is like the drawings kids make on barns and fences. He is much written and talked about now, not only in Berlin and Munich, but in Paris, Florence and Rome. He has said that the artists who have had the greatest influence on him are Giotto, Goya and Rube Goldberg, but mainly Rube. . . . Read "*Chrome Yellow*" with some delight and some disappointment, liking it less than "*Limbo*," and then sat up the rest of the night writing a preface I had promised for a book.

APRIL 10

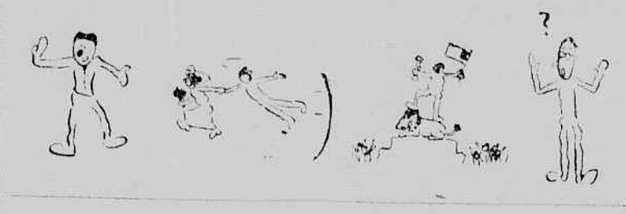
SPENT most of the morning answering letters of good people who are generous enough to write telling you when they like something you have written. Made a promise that I would begin doing that, but I know I shan't keep it. . . . SHERWOOD ANDERSON, in town for a day, dropped in this afternoon, and FRANKLIN P. ADAMS and others came in to meet him. Sherwood is enthusiastic about New Orleans, where he says people have a good time and aren't always trying to do things in a hurry. . . . Read Ray Redman's article on Gourmont in the *Nation*, which is, I think, the finest sketch of Gourmont and his work that has appeared in English. . . . Dropped in on Bunny Wilson and Ted Paramore to-night and was pleased to find that Paramore appreciates "*Finkelstein and His Partner, Maisel*," and "*Krazy Kat*" and that he holds with me that DING is the finest cartoonist in America. Disputed with Wilson on the merits of Ezra Pound and then he told me about Alfieri and Racine, after which I told him about Lucian, Herondas, Menander and Longus. He has never read Lucian, but he has got the Teubner texts and is beginning on him soon. What a delight he has ahead of him, especially since he reads Greek fluently! My Greek is very rusty, I regret to confess. . . . Home at midnight; read "*Kimono*," by John Paris, in the bathtub, and didn't find it nearly so interesting as a book on the same subject by a Japanese called "*The Night Side of Japan*," published some years ago by Lippincott.

APRIL 11

PLANNED to lunch with BEA KAUFMAN at the Algonquin, but when I met her there she was in haste for us to get out without any one's seeing us. I didn't know what to make of it until she told me she was afraid for my life, so vexed were her husband and Peter Toohey at something I wrote last week. . . . Invited to dinner for Friday night by FRANK CROWNINSHIELD, who wants my expert advice on ways in improve *Vanity Fair*; but I'm going to Boston for the week end. . . . My hunch to Crowney is that he lead off every month with "THE WELL DRESSED MAN"; it's one of the best comics in the country. . . . STANLEY RINEHART tells me that under JOHN FARRAR'S editorship the *Bookman* has been so successful that they are going to bring out an English edition, called The *American Bookman*. . . . John's "*Songs for Parents*" contain some of the few verses my daughter knows by heart; she's especially fond of the one running, "I wish I was a gypsy with gold rings in my ears." . . . Read "*The Life and Death of Harriet Frean*" to-night, and I marveled at Miss Sinclair's economy of words, as well as at the sheer strength of the story. No woman since Jane Austen has been able to present and suggest so much with a paragraph. . . . P. S.—"That sort of stuff is all right, I guess, in its way," said the Boss, handing back the galley proofs of the above, "but I was led to suppose when I hired you that you wrote book reviews." All right. This is easier; but next week I'll be serious—not so serious as Dr. Smythe—but serious.

## *The Poets' War : A History in Brief*—By BEN RAY REDMAN

*Illustrations by Robert Nathan, Author of "Autumn"*



April 6, 1922—Louis Untermeyer, writing in "The Nation," under the title, "A War for Our Poets, enumerates recent British critical outrages against American poetry, and suggests that a Washington conference be held to settle differences that might easily lead to war.

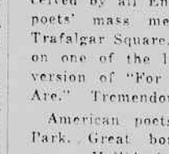
May 1—"The London Morning Post" comments editorially on Mr. Untermeyer's article and hints at the sinister undertones which run beneath its surface.

May 2—"The Morning Post" comments editorially on the necessity of keeping Colonial poetry under the eye of English reviewers. "A stern hand is necessary."

May 3—"The Morning Post" publishes a front page article, entitled, "The American Menace," in which documents are published proving conclusively that American poets are plotting to cast off the critical shackles of the Motherland.

May 4—An obscure American poet is assassinated in the columns of "The New Statesman."

May 6—Feeling runs high in America. A furious assault is launched in the columns of "The Literary Review" against a group of feeble Georgians. An English poet is snubbed by a lecture manager in New York.



May 7—Feeling runs high in England. Mobilization orders are received by all English reviewers. A poets' mass meeting is held in Trafalgar Square. Kipling, standing on one of the lions, reads revised version of "For All We Have and Are." Tremendous enthusiasm.

American poets rally in Central Park. Great bonfire of Georgian verse. Holliday's bookshop raided for latest English importations. Mass meeting in Madison Square Garden, presided over (inevitably) by John Farrar. Fiery speeches. Johnny Weaver, standing firmly on both legs, insists that he is not too young to fight.

May 8—Thomas Hardy, in a letter to "The London Times," pleads for arbitration. J. C. Squire voices opinion that war is inevitable. Individual members of the Squirearchy, interviewed later in the day, voice opinion that war is inevitable.

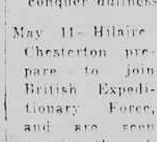
Two thousand minor British poets on lecture tour in United States storm steamship office.

Another mass meeting in Madison Square Garden. Harriet Monroe arrives from Chicago. Temporary Supreme War Council organized, composed of Amy Lowell, Louis Untermeyer, Harriet Monroe and John Farrar. Johnny Weaver arrives at meeting late; explains that he had been on a big party the night before and starts to make a speech. The Supreme War Council goes into secret session.

May 9—The Supreme War Council sends ultimatum to English poets and reviewers, demanding apology in full for recent critical outrages and the suppression of "The New Statesman," "The Anathaneum" and "The London Mercury." Ultimatum to expire in twenty-four hours.

Brander Matthews sends resignation to all his London clubs.

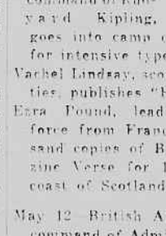
Ezra Pound leaves London at dead of night in a coster's cart and succeeds in making his way across the Channel disguised as a student of languages; T.S. Eliot announces intention of remaining in England and mentions incidentally that "The Phoenix and the Tortoise" is the finest poem in the English language.



Alfred Noyes leaves to fill chair of Mexican poetry at University of Mexico.

May 10—British poets answer American ultimatum by declaration of war. Unpublished verses of T. S. Eliot and Mrs. Richard Aldington (nee Hilda Doolittle) seized as propaganda and authors interned as enemy aliens. American spy captured in London, charged with undermining morale of British families by secret distribution of John Farrar's "Songs for Parents."

Declaration of war finds Americans calm but determined. "I will fight to my last imagist," declares Miss Lowell, who also announces her intention of organizing and leading Woman's Battalion of Death.



Edna St. Vincent Millay cables from Paris: "I am ready for war work."

The Editors of "Broom" issue manifesto from Rome stating that international scope of their magazine requires them to maintain strict neutrality.

H. L. Mencken telegraphs Stuart Pratt Sherman: "The international situation demands solid front at home. Will you be my second in command of company of critical Rough Riders which I am organizing?"

Burton Rascoe lunches with Paul Elmer More.

Brander Matthews and Ludwig Lewisohn sit side by side at "The Dover Road" and hiss in unison.

James Branch Cabell telegraphs to "The Literary Review: "Dullness will conquer dullness."

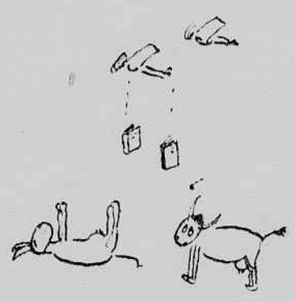
May 11—Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton prepare to join British Expeditionary Force, and are seen running through Hyde Park, before breakfast, in "shorts."

Sea and Slaughter School, under command of Rudyard Kipling, goes into camp on Salisbury Plains for intensive typewriter drill.

Vachel Lindsay, scouring British royalties, publishes "Hymn of Hate."

Ezra Pound, leading small raiding force from France, lands one thousand copies of Braithwaite's "Magazine Verse for 1921" on the north coast of Scotland.

May 12—British Air Squadron, under command of Admiral Robert Bridges, leaves decks of North Sea fleet, cruising fifty miles off American coast,



and bombs Chicago with Victorian verses under false impression that it is the Literary Center of America. Three packers, two bigamists and one newspaper reporter fatally injured.

May 13—Admiral Bridges discovers he has been tricked by H. L. Mencken, and leads flight over New York, directing bombs against 20 Vesey Street, "The New York Times," the Tribune Building and the Algonquin. John Peale Bishop is severely wounded by an Arthurian epic, which explodes into three thousand cantos.

Ninety per cent of the typewriters purchased by the Supreme War Council are found to be defective. British plot to disable all American typewriters unearthed. It is discovered that all but two American poets have forgotten how to write in longhand. Appeal issued to high schools to furnish volunteers who can write legibly.

Ellery Sedgwick issues public announcement declaring that in view of the deplorable situation the publication of "The Atlantic Monthly" must be temporarily discontinued. F. P. A., commenting on this announcement, observes that it is an ill war, etc.

Presses in America and England groan under war requirements. Newspaper owners fear paper shortage.

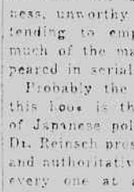
Maurice Hewlett in letter to "London Times" insists that the war will not be really won until James Branch Cabell is captured, tried and hanged.

May 14—Ezra Pound's raid on London premature. Small army routed, and Pound captured. A drumhead court martial decides that shooting is too

good for him, and he is sentenced to six months hard reading at the poetry of J. C. Squire, Edward Shanks and Thomas Mault.

Three English authors marooned in Middle West captured by angry mob and compelled to lecture for one week at nothing a night.

Admiral Bridges launches bomb raid on Baltimore, which ends in complete disaster for the raiders. Mencken's Hot Air Defence Battery functions perfectly, creating air pockets, which send bombers to their death.



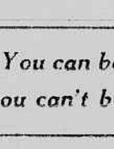
May 15—Paper shortage grows more acute. Publishers and newspaper owners alarmed, call international conference in Genoa to discuss ways and means of restoring peace.

John Masefield, writing from his Olympian retreat in Switzerland, breaks silence for first time since beginning of hostilities with poem entitled, "Above the Conflict."

Edwin Arlington Robinson, when found by persistent reporter, is asked to give his opinion on progress of the war, and replies by asking: "What war?"

"Ladies' Home Journal" sends commission to report on rumors which have been circulated regarding conduct of war workers.

May 15 to June 1—Hostilities continue on land and sea and in the air. Indecisive naval battle off the Azores. Both sides display excellent gunnery; but crews refuse to read enemy ammunition. Carl Sandburg, commanding the Proletarian Poets, advances on the Canadian border. The line of march is littered with *vers libre* thrown away by retreating troops. An aerial battle 10,000 feet above mid-Atlantic is fought with incendiary love poems.



June 2—President Harding issues an appeal for normalcy. Lloyd George threatens to comandeer all British printing presses and devote them to political news. The delegates to the Genoa conference stand solidly for peace. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, China and Japan threaten intervention unless the conflict speedily terminates. The great reading publics of England and America demand a cessation of hostilities.

June 10—Delegates from England and America meet at Paris to settle terms of peace.

June 15—Impossible to go forward with peace conference until American delegates become oriented. They find orientation in damp climate exceedingly difficult.

June 20—The most recalcitrant of the American delegates is finally convinced that the treaty is *not* to be signed at the *Tour d'Argent*, and is led gently to the conference.

The peace treaty is signed, the first article stipulating that each signatory nation agrees that in



future it will not read the poetic productions of the other signatory nation.

The news is flashed around the world. Great rejoicing on both sides of the Atlantic.

## Far East Affairs

AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT IN CHINA. By Paul S. Reinsch. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co. $4.00.

EX-AMBASSADOR REINSCH'S book is in substance a kind of historical sketch covering the events and personages of note during the six years, from 1913 to 1919, that he represented the United States at Peking. The period was a momentous one in Chinese history, a period of change and finally of progressive disorganization, and Dr. Reinsch sheds many interesting sidelights upon it. In form the book is apparently a compromise between a day-by-day diary and a straightforward relation of facts and impressions. This, however, seems an unfortunate choice, for it gives the narrative an undesirable disjointedness, unworthy of its real value and tending to emphasize the fact that much of the material has already appeared in serial form.

Probably the strongest point about this book is the damning indictment of Japanese policy toward China that Dr. Reinsch presents from his personal and authoritative knowledge. Probably every one at all familiar with Far Eastern affairs during the war realizes that Japan's actions toward her great neighbor were characterized by extreme disingenuousness and that they laid her open to the charge of a breach of good faith toward her allies, but very few could support their statements in this matter by reference to chapter and line so specific as the author's. Next to this, the most outstanding picture presented is that of the inherent weakness of China's republican government.

Dr. Reinsch's belief in the commercial future of China, and his unusual efforts to induce American capital to participate in the opportunities offered, for the sake of both parties, reflect much credit on his perspicacity and persistence. Unfortunately, circumstances temporarily adverse have since undone much of his good work, and the recent Chinese default on the interest of an American loan negotiated under his auspices must have been a great discouragement to him. One cannot help believing, however, that the views of China's future, which he gives in this book, are fundamentally sound, and that time will vindicate his judgment.

His sketches of the personalities who have figured and are figuring as "dramatis personnae" in China are always illuminating and often entertaining.

## We Recommend---

**"The House of Rimmon"** (Macmillan), by Mary S. Watts—As being a corking good story; as being a searching arraignment of the ways and means of theatrical success in New York; as containing more epigrams to the chapter than are to be found in the complete works of F. Scott Fitzgerald; as a superb delineation of character in the figure of Delmar, the theatrical producer, and in Cleve Harrod, the talented central figure, who, beaten by the public taste, becomes a successful hack; as being a bitter, beautiful, well written story by one of the best of American realists.

**"The New Heavens"** (Scribner's), by George Ellery Hale—As being a summary of the most recent knowledge of the celestial bodies written by the director of Mount Wilson Observatory; as being as fascinating as any novel, and as easily read by the layman; as worth more than any three university courses in astrophysics; as being a stimulus to meditation and to imagination; and as being appropriately well illustrated.

**"Merton of the Movies"** (Doubleday, Page & Co.), by Harry Leon Wilson—As being the most joyful and gorgeous satire on the motion picture industry that has ever appeared; as being a novel packed with humor by a man of great gifts for fantastic whimsy and acute observation; as being the latest and perhaps the best work by one of the most civilized and intelligent literary artists in America; as being a story which if you don't enjoy you should consult a physician or a psychoanalyst.

**"American Portraits"** (Houghton, Mifflin), by Gamaliel Bradford—As being a new slant on the lives and character, weaknesses and strength of important Americans, such as Henry Adams, Henry James, Mark Twain, Grover Cleveland, James G. Blaine and J. McN. Whistler; as being a remarkable model for biographers who wish to be informative, illuminating and yet be eminently readable; as being a literary achievement in its lucid, compact prose in which every word counts; as supplying a serious lack of authentic portraits of Americans who were conspicuous in the arts, politics and thought of our country.

**"The Behavior of Crowds"** (Harper), by Everett Dean Martin—As a vigorous and sprightly analysis of the character of group opinions; as a psychological and sociological document of the first importance; as an explanation of the lynch spirit and of the opinions of "The New Republic"; as showing that the crowd mind is quite as much at work in intellectual and artistic circles as it is in remote and barbaric centers, and just as liable to be wrong and incapable of enlightment; as a wise and beautiful book, which if read and heeded might lead some of us to think for ourselves, say, at least once a fortnight.

**"Sea and Sardinia"** (Seltzer), by D. H. Lawrence—As a travel narrative of the most unusual sort; as further revelations of one of the most interesting minds in England; as being a highly personal record of mental impressions by a man who apparently doesn't see but merely feels objects and landscapes, et cetera, which is a relief from the ordinary travel book with its tedious efforts at depiction and description of snow-capped mountains and mottled skies, broad valleys and tangled underbrush.

**"Abbe Pierre"** (Appleton), by Jay William Hudson—As a gay and pretty story in the William J. Locke school of fiction; as a romance which may be read without pain or boredom.

**"The Crow's Nest"** (Knopf) by Clarence Day jr.—As being gentle, smiling admonishments to serious, purposeful people with ideas for reforming the world, saving society from ruin, and taking themselves too seriously; as the suavest and yet the most acid criticism of human conventions, notions, ideas, rules and regulations that has appeared in a long time; as being humor by an authentic humorist.

**"Orientations of Ho-Hen"** (Bobbs-Merrill) by T. K. Hedrick—As being the subtly acrid comment of a genuine wit upon the follies of the day; as being an ingenious burlesque of the current translations from the poetry of the Chinese and at the same time as being often as good as the best of these translations and quite as beautiful and delicate; as being an expression of a curiously interesting mind, with facets of cleverness, wisdom and poetic delicacy.

### *We Don't Care for—*

**"Dancers in the Dark"** (Doran), by Dorothy Speare—Because it is a silly book, badly written.

**"Public Opinion"** (Harcourt, Brace & Co.), by Walter Lippman—Because it is so much in need of editing; because the reader has to winnow so much dusty chaff for a grain of information.

**"Painted Windows"** (Putnam), by The Gentleman With a Duster—Because it is about English divines, none of whom, with the exception of Dean Inge and General Booth, interests us; and because it echoes again the age-old lament that the church no longer has the sort of influence it once had. Well, who wants it to have?

**"The Lonely Warrior"** (Harcourt, Brace & Co.), by Claude Washburn—Because it is written like a first year high school composition; because it is filled with callow cant about the heedlessness of youth, the materialism of New York, the nudity of the musical comedies, etc., etc.

**"Kimono"** (Liveright), by John Paris—Because it is a prurient Englishman's account of the Yoshiwara and of marriage customs in Japan; because it represents the typical Occidental assumption that Oriental civilization is inferior and should be reformed or wiped out; because its attempts to be bright are dull.